

MT AUTO PARTS

Cracked, Kerbed or Corroded

How to Deal With Damaged BMW Alloys

A practical guide for BMW owners, covering all models and generations, on identifying alloy wheel damage, deciding whether to repair or replace, and sourcing genuine used BMW alloy wheels at a sensible price.

Introduction

BMW alloys are among the most recognisable features on any BMW, from the classic five-spoke designs of the E46 3 Series to the bold 20-inch rims fitted to modern M Sport and M Performance models. They complete the look of the car, and when they're damaged, it shows.

The problem is that BMW alloy wheels are not cheap to replace new, and the roads they're driven on, particularly in the UK, are unforgiving. Potholes, tight car parks, kerbs, and years of road salt all take their toll. At some point, most BMW owners will have to make a decision: repair the damage, or find a replacement.

This guide is written for owners of any BMW — whether you're driving a 1 Series on standard 17-inch alloys, a 3 Series on M Sport 18 or 19-inch rims, a 5 Series on 18 or 19-inch OEM wheels, or a 7 Series on large 20-inch alloys. The advice here applies across E, F, G and U generation vehicles, and covers everything from identifying the type of damage to finding quality [used BMW alloy wheels](#) at a fraction of main dealer prices.

1. BMW Alloy Wheels — A Brief Overview Across Models

BMW fits alloy wheels as standard across its entire model range. The size, design and finish vary considerably by model, generation and trim level, and this matters when it comes to repair and replacement.

Model	Typical OEM Wheel Sizes	Notes
1 Series (E81/E87, F20/F21, F40)	16" – 18" standard; 18" M Sport	BMW 1 Series alloy wheels use 5x120 PCD (E/F); F40 uses 5x112
2 Series (F22/F23, G42)	17" – 19" depending on trim	M235i and M Sport variants often run 18" or 19" rims
3 Series (E46, E90, F30, G20)	16" – 19" standard; 18"–19" M Sport	BMW 3 Series alloy wheels — one of the most widely available used
4 Series (F32/F36, G22/G26)	17" – 20" depending on trim	Coupe and Gran Coupe share wheel specs with 3 Series in many cases

Model	Typical OEM Wheel Sizes	Notes
5 Series (E60, F10, G30)	17" – 20" standard and M Sport	BMW 5 Series alloy wheels often 18" or 19" on Sport/M Sport trims
6 Series (E63, F06/F12/F13)	18" – 20"	Grand Coupe and Convertible; large alloys common across the range
7 Series (E65, F01, G11/G12)	18" – 21" across generations	BMW 7 Series wheels tend to larger diameters; 19"–20" typical OEM
8 Series (G14/G15/G16)	19" – 21"	High-spec model; 20" and 21" BMW alloy wheels common
X1–X7 SUVs	17" – 22" depending on model	X5 and X7 frequently fitted with 19"–21" alloys
M Models (M2–M8)	18"–21" forged alloys	Forged rims on most M cars; BMW M Sport wheels and M Performance available
Z3 / Z4 (E85/G29)	16" – 19"	Roadster-specific wheel designs; often sought as used BMW alloy wheels

One thing worth knowing: most BMWs from the mid-E generation onwards use a 5x120 bolt pattern with a 72.6mm centre bore, meaning [genuine BMW alloy wheels](#) often cross-fit between certain models and generations. The exception is the more recent G and U generation, some of which have moved to a 5x112 pattern. Always verify the specification for your car before purchasing a replacement.

2. The Three Main Types of Alloy Wheel Damage

Most alloy wheel damage falls into one of three categories. Each carries different implications for safety, repair options and cost.

Kerb Damage — Scuffs, Gouges and Rim Rash

The most common complaint across all BMW models. A tight parking spot, a momentary misjudgement, or a brush with a high kerb edge leaves scratches or gouges along the outer rim lip. On standard painted wheels it looks unsightly; on diamond-cut alloys, common on M Sport and higher-trim BMWs from the E generation onwards, it exposes bare alloy underneath, which can begin to corrode if left untreated.

Kerb damage is primarily a cosmetic issue, but it deserves attention promptly. Exposed alloy on a diamond-cut rim will oxidise quickly in UK winter conditions, turning a straightforward repair job into a more complex one.

What to check: Run your finger along the rim lip. Light scuffs are smooth; deeper gouges feel like a step or groove. On diamond-cut alloys, look for areas where the polished face has been scratched through to dull bare metal beneath.

Cracks — A Safety Issue That Cannot Wait

A cracked alloy is a structural problem. Cracks typically result from a hard impact, hitting a pothole, a sharp kerb drop, or a collision, and they range from hairline fractures that are almost invisible to obvious splits across a spoke or through the barrel. On larger, lower-profile wheels that are increasingly common on modern BMWs (18, 19 and 20-inch fitments on 3, 5 Series and X-model alloys) the reduced tyre sidewall offers less cushioning, making the wheel itself more susceptible to cracking on impact.

Under UK MOT regulations, a wheel must be free from fractures and welding defects. A cracked wheel that compromises structural integrity is a dangerous defect. More critically, a crack can propagate under load and heat, particularly on motorways, and a wheel failure at speed is extremely dangerous.

If you suspect a crack, stop driving

Do not continue to use a BMW with a suspected cracked alloy wheel. Reduce your speed, avoid motorways, and have the wheel inspected by a professional at the earliest opportunity.

Corrosion — The Slow Problem That Gets Expensive

Corrosion develops gradually and is easy to miss until it becomes serious. It's particularly prevalent on older E gen. BMWs and diamond-cut alloys across the F generation, and it affects inner barrels just as much as visible faces, sometimes more so.

Road salt is the primary cause on UK cars. It penetrates any crack or chip in the lacquer or protective coating and attacks the aluminium alloy beneath. Brake dust, which is mildly acidic, accumulates behind the spokes and accelerates the process when it isn't cleaned off regularly.

One symptom that catches owners off guard is slow tyre pressure loss with no obvious puncture. This happens when corrosion develops at the bead seat, the point where the tyre seals against the rim. As the alloy pits and oxidises, the seal is compromised and air escapes gradually. If your BMW keeps triggering its TPMS warning light on a specific wheel without evidence of a puncture, bead seat corrosion is a likely cause.

What to check: Look for white or grey powdery deposits on the wheel face, bubbling or flaking lacquer, pitting around spokes or the centre cap area, and, where possible, visible oxidation on the inner barrel around the tyre bead.

3. BMW Alloy Wheel Finishes — What You Have and Why It Matters

The finish on your BMW's alloys directly affects what repair options are available and how much they cost. Specifying the wrong repair type leads to a poor finish match.

Finish	Typically Found On	Repair Approach
Painted / powder-coated	Standard and SE trim BMWs, most E generation alloys	Sand, fill, reprime and repaint — cost-effective
Diamond cut	M Sport and M Performance rims, F and G generation upgrades	CNC re-lathing on specialist equipment — cannot be DIY'd
Two-tone / bi-colour	Selected F and G generation models, some BMW M Sport wheels	Requires colour-matched professional refinish
Satin / matte	G generation M Sport, M Performance and some M models	Specialist matte powder coat, must not be finished in gloss
Polished / chrome	Older E generation models, some Z Series wheels	Polishing or re-chroming; limited shops offer this correctly
Forged alloy (bare/coated)	F80/G80 M3, F82/G82 M4, M5, M6 and M8	Structural assessment before any cosmetic repair

Diamond-cut wheels deserve particular mention — they're common on [BMW 3 Series alloy wheels](#), 5 Series alloy wheels and M Sport fitments across the range. The CNC machining process removes a thin layer of material to create a polished face, which means each re-cut takes the wheel slightly closer to a safe depth limit. Diamond-cut alloys can only be re-machined a handful of times before the wheel becomes too thin to safely cut again. When weighing up repair versus replacement, this finite number of re-cuts is worth factoring in, particularly on older wheels with previous refurbishment work.

4. Repair or Replace? Making the Right Decision

Here is a straightforward reference to help you decide, covering damage types applicable across all BMW models:

Damage	Recommended Action
Light kerb scuff on painted alloy	Repair — standard refurbishment is cost-effective
Kerb scuff on diamond-cut alloy	Repair with CNC re-cut — specialist only, check re-cut history
Deep gouge with bent or deformed rim lip	Structural assessment first; may require replacement
Hairline crack at outer barrel lip	May be repairable by TIG welding — professional assessment needed

Damage	Recommended Action
Crack at spoke, hub face or bead seat	Replace, not safe to repair under any circumstances
Surface corrosion on wheel face	Refurbishment usually effective if caught early
Bead seat corrosion causing slow pressure loss	Strip, treat and repaint inner barrel, or replace the wheel
Minor buckle from pothole	Hydraulic straightening possible at specialist — get assessed first
Severe buckle or flat spot	Replace — straightening beyond safe tolerance
Multiple cracks or previous unsafe weld repair	Replace immediately
Diamond-cut wheel at maximum re-cut depth	Replace — further machining unsafe

General rule of thumb

If the damage is purely cosmetic and the wheel's structural integrity is confirmed as sound, repair is almost always better value. If there is any doubt about structural safety, particularly on performance models with larger, lower-profile tyre fitments, professional inspection before a decision is essential.

5. What a Professional Repair Involves

Understanding the process helps you ask the right questions and identify whether a quote reflects a proper job or a quick fix.

- **Tyre and valve removal:** The tyre is taken off so the full wheel can be treated correctly — a mobile repair that works around the tyre cannot achieve the same standard.
- **Strip and preparation:** Old lacquer and paint are removed, typically by acid dipping or chemical stripping. Any corrosion is addressed by sandblasting.
- **Structural repair where applicable:** Hairline cracks at safe locations are TIG welded; buckles are straightened using hydraulic equipment.
- **Cosmetic filling:** Kerb marks and gouges are filled with high-temperature alloy filler, shaped and smoothed.
- **Diamond cutting (where applicable):** Diamond-cut alloys are re-machined on a CNC lathe. This requires specialist equipment and cannot be replicated by a mobile operator.
- **Priming and painting:** Primer is applied in a controlled, enclosed environment, followed by the base coat and protective clear lacquer.

- **Oven curing:** The finished wheel is baked — typically at around 180–200°C — to harden and bond the coating properly.
- **Tyre refitting and balancing:** The tyre is remounted and the wheel balanced using adhesive weights, not clip-on types, which can scratch the coating.

Mobile repair vs workshop repair

Mobile alloy repair services are a convenient option for light cosmetic scuffs on standard painted wheels. However, they cannot carry out structural repairs, CNC diamond cutting, or properly oven-cured powder coating. For anything beyond a surface scuff — or for diamond-cut, M Sport or M Performance alloys — a dedicated workshop is the right choice.

6. Realistic UK Costs for BMW Alloy Wheel Repair

Prices vary by damage type, wheel size and finish. Here is a realistic guide for the UK market:

Repair Type	Approximate Cost (per wheel)
Light scuff, painted alloy — mobile repair	£45 – £80
Standard refurbishment, painted alloy — workshop	£80 – £130
Diamond-cut refurbishment (CNC re-lathe)	£130 – £200
TIG crack welding (minor, safe location)	£100 – £180 plus refurbishment cost
Buckle straightening — hydraulic workshop	£60 – £120
Inner barrel corrosion treatment	£80 – £150
Main dealer refurbishment (diamond cut)	£160 – £400+

Larger wheels, 19-inch and 20-inch alloys common on 5, 7 Series and X-model BMWs, generally cost more to repair than smaller 17-inch or 18-inch fitments due to material and labour. Main dealer pricing sits at the higher end; experienced independent alloy specialists routinely match or exceed dealer quality at significantly lower cost, and typically offer a warranty on the work.

The cost of leaving it

A small lacquer breach from a kerb scuff left untreated will allow moisture and salt to get behind the coating, spreading corrosion across the rim face. What begins as a £100 cosmetic repair can become a much more complex job, or make a wheel unserviceable. Address damage early.

7. When You Need to Replace — Buying Used BMW Alloy Wheels

Some wheels are beyond safe or economical repair. When that's the case, replacement is the right answer, and sourcing [used BMW rims](#) from a reputable BMW breakers yard is, for most owners, the most sensible route.

Genuine BMW alloy wheels are expensive new. A single replacement OEM wheel for a 5 or 7 Series from a main dealer can run to several hundred pounds, more for M Sport or M Performance rims. Used BMW alloy wheels in good condition, sourced from a specialist breakers yard and supplied with a warranty, offer genuine BMW quality at a realistic price.

What to Check Before Buying Used BMW Alloy Wheels

- **Match the style number:** BMW genuine alloy wheels carry a style number (e.g. Style 379, Style 666M, Style 825M). Matching this confirms correct design and finish.
- **Verify PCD and offset:** Most BMWs from the E Series use a 5x120 PCD; some newer G and U Series models use 5x112. Offset varies across models and must match your car.
- **Confirm the diameter:** BMW alloy wheels come in a wide range of sizes — 17-inch, 18-inch, 19-inch and 20-inch are the most common across the 1–7 Series and X models. Verify the exact size against your current fitment or handbook.
- **Check the centre bore:** Most BMW models use a 72.6mm centre bore. An incorrect bore creates vibration and compromised wheel seating.
- **Ask about the finish:** Confirm whether the wheel is painted, diamond-cut or bi-colour. A replacement should match your existing set.
- **Inspect for damage:** A reliable seller of used BMW alloy wheels will describe condition honestly — kerb marks, any refurbishment, and whether the barrel is clean.
- **TPMS sensor:** Many BMW models from the E Series LCI onwards and throughout the F and G generation use tyre pressure monitoring sensors fitted inside the wheel. Check whether the sensor is included or needs to be transferred.
- **Warranty:** Any reputable seller of used [BMW alloys for sale](#) should offer at least 30 days' warranty on the wheel.

Typical Wheel Sizes by Model — Quick Reference

When searching for used BMW alloy wheels for sale, knowing the standard sizes for your model helps narrow the search quickly:

Model	Common Sizes to Search
BMW 1 Series alloy wheels (E81–F40)	17" standard, 18" M Sport — BMW 1 Series alloy wheels are widely available used
BMW 3 Series alloy wheels (E46–G20)	17" standard, 18"–19" M Sport — among the most common used BMW alloy wheels on the market
BMW 5 Series alloy wheels (E60–G30)	17"–18" standard, 19" M Sport — BMW 5 Series alloy wheels frequently available in 18" and 19"
BMW 7 Series wheels (E65–G11/G12)	18"–20" — BMW 7 Series wheels are larger; 19" and 20" OEM sizes most common
X1 / X3	17"–19" depending on generation and trim
X5 / X7	19"–21" — larger alloy sizes; used sets commonly available
M Models	18"–21" forged alloys — confirm model-specific fitment carefully

8. Looking After Your BMW Alloys — Prevention

A little regular maintenance goes a long way, particularly on diamond-cut or polished alloys where any breach in the protective coating can lead to rapid corrosion.

- **Clean with a pH-neutral wheel cleaner:** Brake dust accumulates quickly and is mildly acidic. Clean at least every two weeks, or more frequently in winter.
- **Rinse off road salt promptly:** UK road salt left on BMW alloy wheels accelerates corrosion, particularly around any existing lacquer chips or kerb marks.
- **Apply a wheel sealant or ceramic coating:** Creates a barrier against brake dust, salt and contamination. Especially worthwhile on diamond-cut alloys.
- **Touch in lacquer chips early:** Any exposed bare alloy is an entry point for moisture. A prompt touch-in with clear lacquer costs almost nothing and prevents a much bigger job later.
- **Maintain correct tyre pressures:** Correct pressure significantly reduces the risk of pinch damage from potholes — one of the leading causes of cracked and buckled BMW rims.
- **Inspect after any hard impact:** If you clip a pothole hard enough to feel it through the steering, check the wheel carefully. Any vibration, pulling or slow pressure loss after an impact warrants professional inspection.

9. Used BMW Alloy Wheels — MT Auto Parts

MT Auto Parts stocks a wide range of used BMW alloy wheels from vehicles across the F, G and U generations. All wheels are carefully removed from genuine BMW vehicles and listed with honest condition descriptions.

Whether you need a single replacement to match a damaged wheel, a set of used BMW alloys for sale at a sensible price, or a specific OEM style to replace worn or damaged rims, our stock covers most newer BMW models and wheel sizes.

Find used BMW alloy wheels for sale

Visit <https://mtautoparts.com/> to search our current stock of used BMW alloy wheels. Stock is updated regularly as new vehicles come through the yard. If you can't find a specific size or style, get in touch, we may be able to source it.

Summary

Damaged alloy wheels are one of the most common problems BMW owners face, regardless of whether they're driving a modestly-specced 1 Series on 17-inch rims or a 7 Series on large 20-inch alloys. The damage types are consistent, kerb rash, cracks and corrosion, and so are the principles for dealing with them.

Cosmetic damage is almost always repairable and usually worth repairing. Structural damage, cracks, buckles or corrosion through the bead seat, demands immediate attention and often replacement. When replacement is the answer, used BMW alloy wheels sourced from a specialist breakers yard offer genuine OEM quality at a realistic price, typically with a warranty, and without the main dealer premium.

The key is to act quickly, match the specification carefully, and buy from a seller who knows BMW wheels inside out.

Browse used BMW wheels for sale at <https://mtautoparts.com/>